

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CON'T.)

### **4. Can I make a referral directly to a community-based mental health provider?**

Yes. If a child already is enrolled with a mental health provider, you can contact the specific treatment provider directly and coordinate care. Questions can be directed to the DMH Access Helpline at (888) 793-4357.

### **5. How long do the services last?**

Each service has a defined treatment period with expected targeted outcomes, such as improved coping skills or reduced anxiety.

### **6. Where do I go for services?**

Some services take place in the home while others are in a mental health clinic. Evidence-based treatment providers are located throughout the district.

### **7. What can I expect from Families First services?**

Clinical results show that evidence-based practices help children and their parents overcome difficulties associated with abuse and trauma, reduce levels of depression and emotional distress, and improve parenting practices that strengthen the parent/child relationship.

### **8. Who can I call if I have other questions?**

Questions for all evidence-based programs under the Families First Project can be directed to Denise Dunbar, DMH program manager at (202) 673-7126 or [denise.dunbar@dc.gov](mailto:denise.dunbar@dc.gov).



## DC Department of Mental Health **FAMILIES FIRST** *Project*

District of Columbia Department of Mental Health  
[www.dmh.dc.gov](http://www.dmh.dc.gov)

(202) 673-2200

ACCESS HELPLINE: 888-7WE-HELP (793-4357)

**Vincent C. Gray, Mayor**

**Stephen T. Baron, Director**

*The Families First project is funded by the District of Columbia Department of Mental Health.*



## *A Guide to the* **FAMILIES FIRST** *Project*

**STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES  
WITH PROVEN, FAMILY-CENTERED PROGRAMS**

PROVIDED BY:  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

## HELPING FAMILIES SUCCEED

The Families First project is an evidence-based practice initiative created by the District of Columbia Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to expand the range of mental health services for families and children. The programs made available through Families First are proven to strengthen family life, improve family functioning, and avoid more complex, long-term challenges.

The Families First project:

- Increases access to early intervention and prevention practices that work.
- Meets the needs of children, youth and families who experience depression, anxiety, or acting out behaviors in reaction to trauma and violence.
- Brings together available evidence-based programs for easy referral.

## FAMILY-CENTERED PROGRAMS

The Families First project includes a range of evidence-based mental health treatment and practices appropriate for different age groups proven to make a difference in family life.

### Children up to age 6:

- **Child-Parent Psychotherapy for Family Violence (CPP-FV)** - An early intervention attachment-based treatment for young children (ages 0-6) and their parent or caregiver who have been exposed to interpersonal violence. CPP-FV aims to restore normal development functioning and strengthen the parent-child relationship.
- **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)** - A behaviorally-based intervention that helps a parent develop strong attachment with a preschool aged child (ages 2-6) while managing and working to eliminate the child's challenging behaviors.

### Children and Youth:

- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT)** - A family intervention treatment program for at-risk youth (age 10-18) whose problems range from school truancy to alcohol and/or substance abuse.
- **Multisystemic Therapy (MST)** - An intensive family and community-based program that blends cognitive behavioral therapy, behavior management training, and family therapy to address issues and behaviors associated with at-risk youth (ages 10-17).
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behaviors (MST-PSB)** - An intensive treatment program based on the principles of MST specifically for youth (ages 10-17) who exhibit problem sexual behavior.
- **Trauma-Focus Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT)** - A treatment intervention with joint and individual child (ages 4-18) and parent (or caregiver) sessions. Sessions are designed to reduce symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression, and address behavioral difficulties in children who have experienced sexual abuse and other traumas.

### Young adults between 18 and 21 years old:

- **Transition to Independence Program (TIP)** - A program that works with young adults with emotional and behavioral difficulties to prepare them for transition from foster care into adult roles and independence.

## COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

Families First services are provided by designated community-based providers throughout the District. Qualified providers have received comprehensive training and coaching to deliver these services.

To ensure high-quality implementation of these programs, DMH partnered with Evidence-Based Associates (EBA) to support implementation and ongoing technical assistance for the community-based providers trained in these evidence-based treatment models.



## DC Department of Mental Health **FAMILIES FIRST** *Project*

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **1. Who is eligible for these treatment programs?**

Children, youth and their families (including biological, foster and adoptive families and caregivers) who are District residents as well as children and youth who are wards of the District living in Northern Virginia and Maryland within a 60-mile driving radius.

#### **2. Who can make a referral?**

Referrals can be made from a wide range of sources that come into contact with the child or youth including social workers, case managers, probation officers, community-based mental health providers as well as parents, legal guardians, foster parents or other caregivers.

#### **3. How can I make a referral?**

Referrals for all Families First services can be made by calling the DMH Access Helpline at **1-888 7WE-HELP (1-888-793-4357)**. A care coordinator will review available programs to help identify the most appropriate evidence-based treatment and provider.

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